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# Counting Every Blessing

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# Counting Every Blessing

Isn't this the best time of year, when we gather to give thanks as we focus on our blessings?



▲ Ingrid Weiss Slikkers

Intentionally doing activities with my children, such as gratitude lists to help them experience learning while we “count our blessings one by one,” has yearly reenergized me in parenting my sons with intentionality with continued attempts to guide them in a relationship with Jesus.

I want to be the type of parent who yearns to bring honor and glory to God for the wondrous ways He has intervened in our family's lives, desiring to be a witness and never take things for granted. Therefore, I have a license plate that says “Blessed” and a frame around my Facebook profile picture that scrolls in beautiful letters, “thankful, grateful, blessed.” And the answer to people's questions frequently is, of course, “We are blessed.” These are ways to bring the focus to gratitude.

However, as of late, I've been wrestling with the concept of using the words, “we are blessed,” after stumbling over an article where the summary implied that Christians should never say these words, because saying “we are blessed” indicates God played favorites, especially with those of us in first world countries. I found other authors that allude and argue that this statement instead should be replaced with “we are grateful” and, at times, go as far to state that we should simply state, “we are lucky.” But isn't “we are blessed” the most Christian thing to say? Isn't this what I need to teach to my sons?

Deciding to dig a little deeper after the unsettling I felt reading these articles, the first definition in my hurried internet search came up as “blessed,” meaning “made holy or consecrated.” That gave me something to ponder over. God offers this through the sacrifice of Jesus. What a fitting thing that we should be asking for “showers of blessings” throughout our day!

The search then led me to the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Mathew. According to Jesus Himself, those that are blessed are the poor in spirit, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers. Again, I had to pause and take inventory. Around our special celebrations during this time of year and exchanges of “blessings,” am I, as our family, pausing to think about what Jesus said concerning those that are “blessed”? Do I need to be pausing and leading my family to spend time in the Beatitudes instead of counting all the things we have in comparison to others?

Neither my desire, nor the importance of being grateful with continuous praise on our lips for our Savior, has diminished. I continued to read. Turning more pages, I again came to Jesus' words — this time in the Gospel of Luke, *to whom is given much, much is required* (Luke 12:48). I took a breath and held it, hesitating as I realized how Jesus had held my hand and carried me full circle back to His command that I love my neighbor. It is not about the analysis of the words; it is about my heart, and the best gratitude I can give is in service to others and teaching this to my children. He has given us much, so let us go forth and fulfill His requirements with joy! ■

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*Ingrid Weiss Slikkers is assistant professor of Social Work at Andrews University, a Child and Family therapist, and is constantly learning more about God because of her sons.*

